

TITLE OF PROJECT. Computer Confidence, Internet Ease, Excel Basics & Trac Software: a workshop for apple growers to enhance their market edge.

PROJECT LEADER(S) AND CONTACT INFORMATION. Juliet Carroll, Fruit IPM Coordinator, jec3@cornell.edu, 315-787-2430, New York State Integrated Pest Management Program (NYS IPM), Cornell University, 630 W. North St., Geneva, NY 14456 and Carol Ann Joki, Director of Business Development Services, jokic@flcc.edu, 585-394-3500 ext 7662, Professional Studies and Continuing Education, Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC), 4340 Lakeshore Dr., Canandaigua, NY 14424.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS (on *this* project). K.M. Davies Co., Inc., Laurie Verbridge, lverbridge@kmdavies.com, and Gretchen Craft, gcraft@kmdavies.com, 315-589-4811, 6509 Lake Ave., Williamson, NY 14589.

FUNDING. New York Farm Viability Institute, Small Grants Program to Enhance Specialty Crop Production Businesses

BACKGROUND SITUATION.

In conjunction with K.M. Davies Co. Inc., apple storage operator, we propose to conduct hands-on workshops in computer technology for apple growers that will improve their business success by promoting information technology adoption. This workshop will provide a model for comparable training partnerships that can be easily deployed to benefit tree fruit growers in New York. We are building on previous successes of the two Project Leaders. Carroll worked with Debbie Doubrava, Minard Farms, Clintondale, NY, to develop a TracApple software workshop for apple growers in conjunction with Highland High School, which donated use of their computer lab stating that keeping apple growers profitable and in business via computer technology workshops was good for their community. Joki worked with Tim Moore, Canandaigua Wine Co., and Tim Martinson, Yates County Cornell Cooperative Extension, to develop a computer technology curriculum including introductory and advanced sessions in Excel, Word, and QuickBooks, offered at Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC) to grape growers.

The median age of apple growers in New York is climbing and it is imperative we demystify computers and associated information technologies for this audience so they can capture the market edge that traceability offers. Our ability to develop a computer workshop for apple growers featuring user-friendly, utilitarian TracApple© software will make it more likely that they will adopt the use of computers and continue using them even after the workshop is over. K.M. Davies seeks to improve the computer literacy of their growers recognizing that it will greatly facilitate keeping records, generating reports, and tracing product. The ability to use Excel, TracApple, email and the Internet are skills that growers can quickly put to use to improve business management on their farms and communicate reports to storage operators and potential buyers. In an increasingly global market, the ability to trace back product to the seller and to the producer, to quickly access all the production records associated with that commodity, will prove to be a critical market edge.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF PROJECT.

Participating apple growers will become computer literate and K.M. Davies storage will benefit from electronic grower records by the end of 2005. A computer-workshop module that can be used for future tree fruit grower educational purposes will be developed. Apple growers will benefit directly from enhanced computer skills that will improve record keeping, streamline reports, create spreadsheets, and enhance the overall management of their business enterprise. In addition, Internet skills will open a vast source of informational resources including the [NYS IPM Program](#), the [Cornell Fruit Resources](#) page, the [Cornell Dept. of Applied Economics and Management](#), the [EPA Worker Protection Standard](#), the [NY Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health](#), the [Cornell GAPs Program](#), the [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#), etc.

Storage operators, packers and shippers will also benefit from the enhanced records and reports generated by growers on computers and submitted electronically via the Internet. For example, with a grower's electronic TracApple Spray Data on their computer and a simple copy/paste, apple storages would be able to instantly populate a grower's season-long pesticide history into the report forms required by every apple processor that purchases New York apples – greatly enhancing their ability to capture markets.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES.

Carroll (NYS IPM) and Joki (FLCC) met with KM Davies personnel to design the computer course content, determine dates and times to offer the courses and develop promotional materials to announce their availability. KM Davies personnel contacted Williamson High School to reserve the computer laboratory in which to conduct the training sessions and placed advertisements for the courses in The Sun & Record and Sodus Williamson Pennysaver newspapers. Carroll provided to KM Davies the names of apple growers who had purchased TracApple software in the Wayne county region so that announcements about the computer training sessions could be sent directly to these growers. KM Davies also sent an announcement to their employees and producers that store fruit with them. Copies of announcements and advertisements are included in the supporting materials folder. KM Davies handled course registrations.

Table 1. Computer session dates and times and numbers attending.

date	time	session	attendees
12-Feb	8:30-11:30 am	Basic & Internet	14
12-Feb	12:30-3:30 pm	Excel & Trac	9
1-Mar	6:00-9:00 pm	Basic & Internet	7
2-Mar	6:00-9:00 pm	Excel & Trac	11
15-Mar	6:00-9:00 pm	Basic & Internet	8
17-Mar	6:00-9:00 pm	Excel & Trac	15
21-Mar	6:00-9:00 pm	Basic & Internet	8
22-Mar	6:00-9:00 pm	Excel & Trac	9

Joki contracted with Jack Kellog to teach 3 modules, Computer Basics, Internet Ease, and Excel Basics. Carroll taught the TracApple modules. The four modules were offered in two sessions – Computer Basics & Internet Ease and Excel Basics & TracApple. The sessions were each held four times during February and March. Each session lasted 3 hours, allowing approximately 1.5 hours per module and time for a break. See Table 1 for dates and times. Each participant used a computer in the high school lab for hands-on learning during the course. Kellog and Carroll developed a training manual for all four modules. This was published by FLCC and provided to each participant. Participants received a course evaluation, handed in at the end of the session, and a certificate of course completion. FLCC collated the course evaluations. Producers attending the TracApple training modules received a copy of the 2005 version of the software.

RESULTS AND FARMER/BUSINESS-LEVEL IMPACTS.

- A total of 54 individuals participated in the computer training (Table 2, attached). 37 people attended the Computer Basics and Internet Ease session and 44 attended the Excel Basics and TracApple session. 27 people attended both sessions, 10 attended only the Computer Basics and Internet Ease session and 17 only the Excel and TracApple session.
- We reached the grant project milestone of offering the computer training modules a total of four times. The staggered scheduling and open registration of sessions allowed participants to attend all sessions at their convenience. Five, out of 27 participants that attended all the sessions, attended on different weeks.

- Farmers improved their computer skills and became familiar with TracApple software. The level of computer literacy among participants varied from zero (i.e. learning how to use a keyboard and turn the computer on) to proficient. Impacts were greater for those whose skill level was low to moderate. Computer literacy will benefit their farm businesses by improving their ability to access Internet resources, streamline record-keeping, generate reports, etc.
- Farmers were very interested in the application of computers to farm business management. The open forum of the courses allowed for discussions and questions to better tailor the outcomes to the farmers' needs and plans. Actual assessment of this impact will require follow-up interviews with producers and is not included in this report.
- In the future, KM Davies envisions computer tracking of their storages linked to producer/production information that has the potential to improve the quality of sourced product from storage rooms and the ability of the grower to capitalize on the attributes of their produce.

PRODUCER PARTICIPATION.

- A total of 40 producers (out of 54 total) were involved in the project.
- Producers attended one or both of the sessions to learn about computer basics, Internet, Excel, and TracApple and were able to put it into practice "hands-on" on the computers in the lab. Participants evaluated the course after each session.
- Contact information for all participants is in Table 2, attached.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS.

A total of approximately 14 non-farm participants attended (Table 2), including Jeff Alicandro, Lindsay Alicandro, Jill Andrews, Pam Barclay, Michael Bixby, Rayburn Bush, Dan DeCrocker, Ronald Ferris, Michael Frazer, Ian Stead, Scott Stead, Janis Stead, Rodney Steurys, Kathy Steurys. These participants included 1 crop insurance adjuster, 2 independent private consultants, 3 agricultural business, and 8 KM Davies.

OUTREACH & MEDIA.

KM Davies announced the computer training sessions via the local news media (Sun & Record, Sodus Williamson Pennysaver) and in direct mailings to their clients. Carroll sent information about the training to the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Lake Ontario Fruit Team (LOFT) and the Rural Entrepreneurship Collaborative to inform them about the Wayne county computer training as well as plans to make it available statewide. The final results of the training sessions, from this report, will be published in the LOFT CCE newsletter. Once the training modules are made available statewide, the results of the project and the availability of the training modules will be published in CCE regional fruit program newsletters, the Core Report, and on web sites serving the fruit industry of New York.

PRODUCER EVALUATION.

Evaluations of the Computer Basics and Internet Ease module were returned by 68% of participants and all indicated the course met their objectives. This session received an average motivational rating of 5.0 on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 6 (completely). The average rating for course content was 3.0 and for course instructor was 3.4, on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (tops). According to farmers, the information might have been too basic for some and many would have liked more sessions.

Evaluations of the Excel Basics and TracApple module were returned by 93% of participants and all indicated the course met their objectives. This session received an average motivational rating of 4.7 on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 6 (completely). The average rating for course content was 3.1 and for course instructor was 3.4, on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (tops). According to farmers, they would have liked more sessions to gain more in-depth knowledge of Excel or offering an advanced Excel course.

YOUR EVALUATION.

We were very successful in achieving the intended outcome of training apple growers in the use of computers and motivating them to want to continue applying information technology to their farm businesses. We were very successful in informing growers about TracApple software and demonstrating its use and application. We had hoped to hold the sessions five times each, but due to insufficient lead-time, the first course offerings were cancelled. The keys to success were to make a computer lab available so that growers could learn hands-on and to offer the sessions on evenings or weekends. We were limited in the depth of the subject matter that could be covered in the time allotted and the dates available to offer the training so as to not conflict with crop production responsibilities.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES, SPIN-OFF EFFECTS.

We were asked by the NYFVI review panel to make the computer training sessions available statewide. We have decided to do this by offering the course modules on the Internet, hosted on the NYS IPM website. Kellog and Carroll will develop a more in-depth training manual for growers, teacher syllabus, course evaluations and registration materials. NYS IPM will create a home page to inform visitors about how to conduct the training program and a registration portal for interested partners who plan to offer the computer training programs. Partners should include CCE, community colleges or local instructional institutions, local schools or other facilities with a computer lab, a farmer organization, and NYS IPM in order to provide all the pieces necessary to make the training programs successful. This web site will be launched in Dec 2005 and promoted this winter via CCE newsletters, winter meetings and commercial fruit and agricultural organizations.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS.

The participant list is in Table 2 (attached), one copy each of this report, the newspaper articles, letter announcement, the Computer Training Manual, the course evaluation and evaluation summaries are being sent to The NY Farm Viability Institute, 162 Morrison Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850

Table 2. NYFVI Grant Participants - Computer Confidence, Internet Ease, Excel Basics & Trac Software: a workshop for apple growers to enhance their market edge. Carroll & Joki 2005

type	last	first	farm or business	address	city	zip
NF	Alicandro	Jeff	agr.assistance	PO Box 190	N Rose	14516
NF	Alicandro	Lindsay	agr.assistance	1808 Crittenden Rd., Apt1	Rochester	14623
NF	Andrews	Jill	KM Davies	6509 Lake Ave.	Williamson	14589
NF	Barclay	Pam	KM Davies	6055 Barclay Rd.	Sodus	14551
NF	Bixby	Michael	KM Davies	6509 Lake Ave.	Williamson	14589
F	Brugge	Ronald	Brugge Farms	5384 Franklin Rd.	Marion	14505
NF	Bush	Rayburn	KM Davies	6509 Lake Ave.	Williamson	14589
F	Cavallaro	Elizabeth	Belle Terre Farm	4153 Jersey Rd.	Williamson	14589
F	Craft	Gary	G & S Orchards	4570 Lincoln Road	Macedon	14502
F	Craft	David	G & S Orchards	4570 Lincoln Road	Macedon	14502
F	Craft	Kiel	G & S Orchards	4570 Lincoln Road	Macedon	14502
F	Crane	John		7903 Dutch St.	Wolcott	14590
F	DeBadts	Adam	Jay DeBadts & Sons	6735 Maple Ave.	Sodus	14551
F	DeBadts	Doug, Jr	Jay DeBadts & Sons	6735 Maple Ave.	Sodus	14551
F	DeBadts	Jay	Jay DeBadts & Sons	6735 Maple Ave.	Sodus	14551
F	DeBadts	Gary	Jay DeBadts & Sons	6736 Maple Ave.	Sodus	14552
NF	DeCrocker	Dan	KM Davies	6509 Lake Ave.	Williamson	14589
F	DeMarree	Tom	DeMarree Fruit Farm	7654 Townline Road	Williamson	14589
F	Fernaays	Don		6051 S Cantenary Rd.	Williamson	14589
F	Fernaays	Janis		6051 S Cantenary Rd.	Williamson	14589
NF	Ferris	Ronald	Crop Insurance Adj.	5716 Padgham Rd.	Farmington	14425
NF	Frazer	Michael	KM Davies	6509 Lake Ave.	Williamson	14589
F	Hillis	Mike	Hillis Homestead Fr Farm	7147 Maxwell Rd.	Sodus	14551
F	Ingersoll	Doug, Jr	Jay DeBadts & Sons	6736 Maple Ave.	Sodus	14552
F	Jordan	Richard		4213 Miller St.	Williamson	14589

F	LaMora	Earl		228 Crittenden Way, Apt 6	Rochester	14623
F	Langoner	Mark		6954 Tuckahoe Rd.	Williamson	14589
F	Ludwig-Craft	Stephanie	G & S Orchards	4570 Lincoln Road	Macedon	14502
F	Madison	Michael		8142 Champlin Rd.	Sodus	14551
F	Mangus	Joe	Jay DeBadts & Sons	6735 Maple Ave.	Sodus	14551
F	Mason	Doug	Mason Farms	3135 Ridge Rd	Williamson	14589
F	Minns	Phoebe	John Minns Farm	6327 Hill Rd.	Sodus	14551
F	Minns	John	John Minns Farm	6327 Hill Rd.	Sodus	14551
F	Morgan	Ned	Morgan Farms	3843 Cory Crnrs Rd.	Marion	14505
F	Noto	Fedele	Noto Fruit Farm	7539 E Townline Rd.	Williamson	14589
F	Noto	John	Noto Fruit Farm	7539 E Townline Rd.	Williamson	14589
F	Noto	Rhonda	Noto Fruit Farm	7539 E Townline Rd.	Williamson	14589
F	Schutt	Martin	Schutt's Apple Mill	1050 Plank Rd.	Webster	14580
F	Smith	Steve	Smith Bros Farms, Inc.	9348 Ridge Rd.	N Rose	14516
F	Smith	Alan	Smith Bros Farms, Inc.	9444 Ridge Rd.	N Rose	14516
NF	Stead	Ian	Pultney Pickle Factory	984 Willets Rd.	Ontario	14519
NF	Stead	Scott	Pultney Pickle Factory	984 Willets Rd.	Ontario	14519
NF	Stead	Janis	Pultney Pickle Factory	984 Willets Rd.	Ontario	14519
NF	Steurrys	Rodney	KM Davies	5305 Owls Nest Rd.	Marion	14505
NF	Steurrys	Kathy	KM Davies	5305 Owls Nest Rd.	Marion	14505
F	Steurrys	Larry		6574 Tuckahoe Rd.	Williamson	14589
F	Tinklepaugh	Peter	Tinklepaugh Fruit Farm	6060 Joy Rd.	Sodus	14551
F	Verbridge	Kelly		5038 Lake Rd.	Williamson	14589
F	Verbridge	Mike		5038 Lake Rd.	Williamson	14589
F	von Schiller	Manfred		5115 S Geneva Rd.	Sodus	14551
F	Whitcomb	Tim	Border Line Farms	10464 Miner Rd.	N Rose	14516
F	Whitcomb	Ralph	Border Line Farms	10464 Miner Rd.	N Rose	14516
F	Wilson	Ivana	Orchard Ave Farms	10433 Miner Rd.	N Rose	14516
F	Wilson	Robert	Orchard Ave Farms	10433 Miner Rd.	N Rose	14516

*F = farmer and NF = non-farmer participants, as estimated from the contact information. Actual data on this was not collected.